

# THE IMPACTS OF PEER REVIEWING ON EFL WRITING SKILLS

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## ABSTRACT

The research aims at (1) finding out whether the peer reviewing technique significantly improves writing skill of the students at the second years of SMA Negeri 2 Luwu, (2) finding out aspects of writing that improve significantly by using peer reviewing on EFL writing skills.

This research applied a quasi-experimental design to two groups. The experimental group applied peer reviewing technique while the control group applied self reviewing technique. The subjects of this research were the students of the second year's students of SMAN 2 LUWU. The sample was selected by using purposive sampling technique. This covered 40 students as the sample of the research with 20 students in XI IPA 2 as experimental class and 20 students class in XI IPA 1 as control class. The data were collected through written tests of pre-test and post-test for both class and the results of the test were analyzed by using SPSS version 20 program.

The findings showed that there was an improvement on students' writing ability after the treatment. The post-test results proved that the writing skill of the students of experimental group (who used peer-reviewing technique) improved more than the students' writing skill of control group (that used self-reviewing technique) by the mean score  $85.60 > 79.00$ . The difference of both score was statistically significant based on the T-test value at significant level 0.05 in which the P-value is lower than the significant level ( $0.04 < 0.05$ ). Based on the result posttest of aspects of writing, the researcher found out organization aspect more significantly improved by the mean score 4.550 and vocabulary aspect was the lowest with mean score 3.200.

**Keywords:** *Peer Reviewing Technique, Writing, Descriptive Text.*

## INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the important skills in English. It can help the students learn and develop their English by expressing their knowledge, experience and the way of thinking. Writing is one of the activities deal with how to write idea, information, knowledge, or experience and understand the writing to acquire knowledge or some information to share and learn. Writing activities motivate students to engage their ability in learning English. Most of English students of foreign language are not interested in writing because writing is such a difficult skill to be mastered. Similarly, Richard and Renandya (2002:303) stated that writing is the most difficult language skill to be mastered by the students.

For the next, there are many reasons why writing is regarded difficult. There are two major difficulties in composing the writing for EFL students. They are connecting ideas and writing ideas. That is why, the researcher needs writing process which comprise four main stages: planning, drafting, revising and editing. Moreover, Richard and Renandya (2002:303)

state that the difficulty lies how to generate and organize ideas using an appropriate choice of vocabulary, sentence, and paragraph organization.

Dealing with the difficulty in writing skill, the second year's students of Science Program SMAN 2 Luwu, had similar problems. Based on the observation at SMAN 2 Luwu, the teacher said that the students had problem in writing skill. Generally, they did not have ideas and got difficulty in choosing and using appropriate words or vocabulary. Besides that, they did not only get a difficulty in grammar to make sentences into paragraph but also in determining mechanic (punctuation and spelling). In other hand, most of the students were still lack of interest in learning writing.

Referring to the case above, the researcher implemented technique peer reviewing to solve the problem of writing skills. In this research, the researcher focused on writing descriptive text. According to Farrah (2012), Peer reviewing is increasingly conducted in writing classes since the prevalence of communicative approach in recent years, and it has been proved as an effective approach to improve the writing skill and to increase motivation to writing, and to learn how to treat writing as a collaborative social activity. Peer review can be way to open up new possibilities for both writer and reviewer.

Theoretically, peer review in process oriented instruction can find its theoretical support in two different, but closely related disciplines: learning and rhetorical theories. In terms of learning, Vygotsky's (1978) theory on learning and language coincides with the use of peer reviews. Vygotsky deemed social interaction an essential element for cognitive learning and accorded great importance to language in human's thought development. To him, learning is a cognitive activity that takes place in social interaction. By the same token, writing is a learning activity in which the writer learns best through interacting with his peer reviewers. Therefore, it is important to offer students opportunities to immerse themselves in constructive conversation about writing.

In terms of practice, empirical research findings emphasized the positive impacts of peer reviewing, such as enhancing positive attitudes towards writing within ESL/EFL learners; giving students a sense of audience; increasing their motivation and confidence in their writing; helping them learn to evaluate their own writing better (Mittan, 1989); and fostering collaboration and creating positive environment for learning (see Tang and Tithecott, 1999). By learning to evaluate one another's writing, students can also learn new ideas and vocabulary and internalize criteria of good writing so that they can apply them to future writing situations.

Meanwhile, in the process of EFL teaching at the second years of SMAN 2 Luwu. Teaching descriptive text with peer review on EFL writing skill is very important. Because it is important to recognize that the teacher and students each have a role. Technique plays an important role for the success of students in learning so that the students' writing skills becomes a problem and it needs to be improved. The researcher thinks that is necessary to give a technique, which can solve their problem. The researcher decides to look at further information about teaching writing by using peer reviewing. Peer reviewing will be used to teach writing. Purwanto (2008:19) states that peer reviewing technique refers to activity of students in writing and then makes a response (in the form of correction) in his position as a reader. The researcher expects that this research can give some contributions for the students,

teacher and the process of teaching and learning writing. It can be used as measurements on students' writing competence through peer reviewing that can be applied in writing class.

Based on these problems the researcher is interested to build up the research under the title: *The impacts of peer reviewing on EFL writing skills at the second years of SMA Negeri 2 Luwu.*

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to Gielen et al. 2010 Peer reviewing is referred to as 'peer feedback', which is an assessment form performed by equal status learners. In 'peer review' a student does more than simply editing and evaluating another student's essay. Students respond to *what* the essay says as well as *how* it says it (Mangelsdorf, 1992). Peer reviewing is a powerful learning tool (Mangelsdorf, 1992) which provides students with an authentic audience; increases their motivation to write; enables them to receive different views on their writing and read their own writing critically; and assists them in gaining confidence in their writing (Mittan, 1989). For the purpose of this study, peer reviewing is meant to refer to the process where L2 writing students collaborate to assess one another's written composition, which, in this study, refers to essay writing as a replacement of teacher based feedback in L2 writing sessions.

Students work hard in learning how to make more informed decisions about their writing, and to gain more control over improvement of English writing skills. Writing teachers also work hard helping students write fuller, more descriptive and specific papers. Peer review can help since it gives writers more options to consider when they revise their papers. Seattle (1998:2) states that peer reviewing does not preclude teacher feedback, but is meant to supplement it. Students value both types of feedback. With training, practice and guidance, students can learn to be more specific and helpful in their responses to a peer's essay. It is a powerful way for students to enhance their writing.

According to Walz (1982 : 17) points out some of the benefits to be gained from the application of peer reviewing, among others: (a) will be able to strengthen students' motivation in the language learning process, (b) will be able to engage students more actively in the learning process, (c) corrections will be more easily understood by other students, and (d) the application of correction techniques peers and students will be more of a role to be more active in learning. In the process of learning to write, students generally love sharing and comments with a group of friends. Therefore, with the implementation of peer reviewing technique will expect to foster students' critical attitudes so that they will be more careful and avoid mistakes in writing the language as was done by his friend.

## **METHOD**

### **Design and Samples**

This research applied quasi experimental technique by using two groups namely; an experimental and control group. The researcher used purposive sampling technique which means two classes from the six classes takes as the sample (XI science program 1 until XI Science Program 6). Class Science Program 1 was taken as experimental group and class Science Program 2 were taken as control group. The result of calculation of the total number of sample was 40 students. The group experimental group employed treatment by using peer reviewing as a technique, while control group was employed by using self reviewing technique where the students were asked to write descriptive text based on the topic given by the teacher. Both of groups were given pretest and posttest.

### **Instruments and Procedures**

This research used two kinds of instruments in collecting data namely writing test and questionnaire. Writing test consisted of pre-test and post-test. The students were given a descriptive writing test means that the researcher provided some topics to be chosen and developed into text. The pre-test was used to measure of the prior knowledge of the students, while the post-test was aimed to see the students' writing ability after giving the treatment to improve writing skill. In assessing the students' writing skill, five aspect of speaking were covered: content, organization, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics. To get the students' score students' score in writing, the researcher applied the following scoring system based on Gay (2006).

The treatments in experimental and control groups were conducted for six meeting based on the general steps below:

#### *Experimental Group*

1. The researcher introduced the material about descriptive text.
2. The researcher asked the students about the material found out the prior knowledge: *\*Have you ever learnt about descriptive text?* Asking to the students for explained about definition, generic of descriptive text and then the researcher showed some example of picture about descriptive place in toraja land and asking the students for explains it. *\*Have you ever heard about peer reviewing?*
3. The researcher explained to the students the aim of peer reviewing technique and provided one example of peer reviewing technique for the students to see as an example of peer reviewing technique.

4. Introducing the steps learning writing toward peer reviewing, then dividing students into peer. The process of peer reviewing technique, the researcher observed the students' writing activity in the class.
5. Asking the students to exchange their writing (worksheet pretest) with their peers and after that the students reviewing worksheet their peer's (identifies and correct) the peer's writing. And Asking to the students' for gave checklist also based on their descriptive writing text. The students gave comments of their peer's worksheet, such as mistakes of content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics.
6. All procedures of six meeting for experimental group were shown in lesson plan.

### *Control Group*

1. The researcher introduced the material about descriptive text.
2. The researcher asked the students about the material found out the prior knowledge: *\*Have you ever learnt about descriptive text?* Asking to the students for explained about definition, generic of descriptive text and then the researcher showed some example of picture about descriptive place in toraja land and asking the students for explains it.
3. All procedures of six meeting for experimental group were shown in lesson plan.

### **Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed through quantitative analysis. To get the score, the researcher used scoring scale by Gay (2006) which includes the content, organization, language use, vocabulary and mechanics on the students' process of writing. Calculating the mean score and standard deviation of the students' achievement by using SPSS 20. The data of checklist was analyzed by using Analytic Scoring rubric of writing. It aimed to see the students' achievement about use of peer reviewing technique in improving writing ability. The measuring of instrument item of Analytic Scoring.

In writing test, the data were analyzed by employing the following procedures:

1. Scoring the result of the students' test.  
To get the students' score in writing, the researcher applied the following scoring system based on Gay (2006):

Table 3.3 Range Score classification of Writing

<b>Range Score</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
81-100	Very Good
61-80	Good
41-60	Average
21-40	Poor
1-20	Very Poor

2. Classifying the score of the students

In line with Gay (2006), the scoring rubric of writing consists of 5 classifications, namely: Very good, good, average, poor, very poor. The maximal score is 100 while the minimum score is 1. Therefore, if the learners got maximal score in each components in scoring system, the learners would get 100 score but if the students get minimum score each components of scoring system, the students would get 34 score. So, based on the rubric score, to know the students' writing ability in writing descriptive text before and after treatment, it would be classified into 5 categories as follow:

- ✓ 81-100 is classified as very good
- ✓ 61-80 is classified as good
- ✓ 41-60 is classified as average
- ✓ 21-40 is classified as poor
- ✓ 1-20 is classified as very poor

3. Calculating the mean score and standard deviation of the students' achievement by using SPSS 20.
4. Testing the hypothesis of the significant differences between students' writing improvement of experimental group and the control group by calculating the value of t-test.

The data of checklist was analyzed by using Analytic Scoring. It aimed to see the students' achievement about the use peer reviewing technique in improving writing ability. The measuring of instrument item of Analytic Scoring as follows:

1. Scoring Data

The criteria used in assessing writing are content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. This analytic scoring can help English teachers assess students' writing skill. These criteria are offered by Cohen (1994:328-329). Each response had its own value. Look at the table below:

Table 3.4 Analytic Scoring Rubric of Writing

Aspect	Score
Very Good	5
Good	4
Average	3
Poor	2
Very Poor	1

Cohen (1994:328-329).

## 2. Calculating Checklist

In calculating checklist data into percentage, the researcher used the percentage technique by using this formula:

$$P = F / N \times 100\%$$

NOTE:

P = Percentage

F = Frequency of the Answer

N = Number of the Students

(Gay at. Al., 2006)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Students' Writing Ability

Regarding the findings explained previously, it shows that the writing ability of the second grade students of SMAN 2 Luwu improved in the experimental group. It is supported by the students' frequency and rate percentage of the students' pretest and posttest result. The students score in experimental group by using peer reviewing technique in teaching writing was better than before treatment.

Referring to the students' writing pretest of both the experimental and the control group, the researcher analyzed it in terms of five components of writing based on scoring rubric of writing suggested by Gay, 2006. The result of finding shows that the most of the students are still lack of skill to express their idea in writing descriptive text. It is similarly with Richard and Renandya (2002:303) state that the difficulty lies how to generate and organize ideas using an who appropriate choice of vocabulary, sentence, and organization. It indicates that most of the students still find difficulties in overall components of writing.

#### a. The Students' Writing Ability in Pretest and Posttest of Experimental and Control Group

The distribution of the score of the students' writing ability for experimental and control group in post-test shows a difference from the pre-test. After conducting the treatment, both groups showed an improvement, but in the experimental group, improvement was higher than that of the control group. The mean score and standard

deviation of the students' writing ability in pretest and post-test for experimental and control group are shown in table below:

Table 4. The Statistical Summary of Pretest on Each Writing Aspect Assessed in Pretest of Mean Score Based on the Experimental and Control Groups

Writing Elements	Experimental Group	Control Group
	Mean Score	Mean Score
Content	5.1	4.25
Organization	4.25	4.4
Vocabulary	3.05	2.6
Language use	2.6	2.55
Mechanics	3.85	4.05
<b>Average</b>	<b>71.6</b>	<b>70.8</b>

Based on the data above, the mean score of five analytical aspects in the control group and experimental group is different. The average of the mean score in experimental group (71.6) is higher than the average of mean score in control group (70.8).

Table 5 below shows that the mean score of five analytical aspects in the control group and the experimental group is different. The average of the mean score in experimental group (85.60) is higher than the average of mean score in control group (79.00).

Table 5. The Statistical Summary of Posttest on Each Writing Aspect Assessed in Experimental and Control Groups

Writing Elements	Experimental Group	Control Group
	Mean Score	Mean Score
Content	4.3	4.45
Organization	4.6	4.55
Vocabulary	3.7	3.2
Language Use	4.5	3.6
Mechanics	4.35	4
<b>Average</b>	<b>85.60</b>	<b>70.00</b>

Table 6. The Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Students' Writing Ability in Pre-test and Post-test.

Group		Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Pre-test	Experimental Group	71.6	15.40
	Control Group	70.8	11.09
Post-test	Experimental Group	85.60	6.54
	Control Group	79.00	8.78

Table 6 show that the mean score of pretest in the experimental group is higher than the control group, (71.6>70.8). 71.6 And 70.8 are classified as good classification. This means that the students of the experimental and control groups are the same category before treatment. Meanwhile, the mean score of post-test in the experimental group is higher than the mean score of the control group. (85.60>79.00). 85.60 are classified as very good category. While, 79.00 is classified as good category. This means that the peer reviewing technique which was applied in the experimental group is more successful to increase the students' writing ability than the self reviewing technique which was applied in control group.

b. Test of Significance (T-test)

The hypotheses were tested by using inferential statistics. In this, case, the researcher used t-test (testing of significance) for independent sample test. It was intended to know the significance difference between the result of the students' mean scores in the pretest and the posttest in the experimental and control groups. The result of t-test was calculated by using SPSS version 20.0. After using the statistics, the researcher found the probability value of t-test as presented in the following table 4.29

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pretest_Score	Equal variances assumed	1.628	.210	.188	38	.852	.80000	4.24512	-7.79380	9.39380
	Equal variances not assumed			.188	34.534	.852	.80000	4.24512	-7.82222	9.42222

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
posttest_score	Equal variances assumed	.403	.530	2.694	38	.010	6.60000	2.44992	1.64040	11.55960
	Equal variances not assumed			2.694	35.103	.011	6.60000	2.44992	1.62692	11.57308

Based on the result of data analysis as summarized in table 4.29 in the pretest of the experimental and control groups, the researcher found that the probability value or p-value (0.852) was smaller than the level of significance  $\alpha(0.05)$  or  $0.852 > 0.05$ . Whereas, the data in posttest of the experimental group and the control group shows that probability value (p-value) was smaller than  $\alpha$  ( $0.01 < 0.05$ ). It means that the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted while the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected. It is assumed that there is significant

difference between the students' writing ability improvement in the experimental and the control groups after the treatment.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

The use of peer reviewing as a technique was effective to improve the students' writing ability. It is provided by the mean score of the students' posttest in the experimental group and control group which were significantly different. The mean score of the posttest in experimental group was higher than control group. It can be seen from the students' mean score of posttest was 85.60 for experimental group, while for control group the students' mean score of posttest was 79.00. The T-test of the students' writing ability improved in experimental and control group in posttest was significantly different. The inferential statistics supports this statement is which p-value  $0.0001 < 0.05$ .

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher put some suggestions and recommendation. In teaching writing especially in teaching writing descriptive text, the teacher should be creative for preparing their teaching writing material. They can use peer reviewing as a technique to improve the students' writing ability. The teacher should give some enough opportunity and more chance for the students to practice their ability in writing by using peer reviewing technique because it is easier to practice and enjoyable for students. The researchers also recommend that the teacher give various techniques in teaching English especially in writing based on the students' achievement and need. To attract the class, so the students are fun and enjoyable in learning and teaching process.

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